

HOMELAND

By Lorraine Viade, Psy.D.



Homeland is the Showtime series that has received much notice and recognition for its quality acting, writing and willingness to tackle two very important issues in mental health. First is the issue of veterans and how difficult the transition back home can be. Second is how even the most competent and capable people can suffer from a mental disorder. In *Homeland*, Claire Danes plays Carrie, a CIA agent who has bipolar disorder. Her brilliance is also her downfall as she is able to see things that others do not, and being ahead of everyone else around her leads her into a frenzied descent into maddening madness.

In stark contrast is Brody, played by Damian Lewis. He is an over-controlled, returning war veteran who is – or is not – working for the terrorists who held him prisoner for eight years. When these two forces of nature collide, seismic tremors are felt on both sides. In government, there are always secrets, and knowing where the bodies are buried is just as important as knowing who buried them. *Homeland* takes you on a journey where you can suspend stereotypes and get way into the characters, the action and the possibilities. It is one tough ride.

Caught between Brody and Carrie is Jessica, played with such poised elegance and grace by Morena Baccarin. She takes on the difficult task of wife, mother and woman, head-on with no excuses. Jessica has a decency about her that is evident with how she handles the really tough situations. Anyone would love to come back home just to be with someone like her. And yet, these are complex characters with flaws and failings, and those intimate intrigues that can only happen in the Showtime writers' imaginations. Believe me, after watching this series, you will take a much closer look at what it would take to make you snap, crack-up or give up hope completely. Add the always amazing Mandy Patinkin as Carrie's mentor to the mix and *Homeland* can't miss.

Homeland is not about who is right or wrong. You can't take sides in this one because there are enemies everywhere. If you are mature enough to recall the *Manchurian Candidate* then *Homeland* will appeal to you. The first two episodes set the stage for all that follows. Pay close attention to the details and you will find yourself tuning in week after week. *Homeland* was honored at the 2012 Voice Awards and was a big winner at this year's Emmy Awards.

I give *Homeland* five couches. Stay in. Check it out. Season one is on On Demand or Netflix now.

